MR. CHAIRMAN: Secretary-General will convey to the members of the bereaved families our sense of profund sorrow and deep sympathy.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. CHAIRMAN: QUESTION No. 1..... (Interruptions)...

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA: Sir, I had given notice of a motion for suspending the Question Hour to discuss the Punjab floods which have caused heavy losse. It is a national tragedy... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, the Question Hour should not be suspended under pretext. This is a wrong tradition... (Interruptions)...

श्री भूपेन्द्र सिंह मान : चेयरमैन साहब, बाढ़ से बहुत बड़ा नुकसान हुआ है पंजाब में। वहां जगह-जगह लोग तबाह हो गये है। (व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: May I say that the Punjab floods have suspended many things in life and it has also killed many people. Let us not suspend the House also for that.. The Punjab matter is coming up in various forms including Zero Hour... (Interruptions)...

श्री भूपेन्द्र सिंह मान : फ्लड इसलिए आए है कि थीन डेम नहीं गना, और डेम नहीं बने। (व्यवधान) सर, 500 से ज्यादा वहां मौते हो चुकी है और फसलों को बड़ा न बड़ा नुकसान हुआ है। इसलिए ईस पर बहस जानी है। (व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will you please sit down?... (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Floods have to be discussed. It is not only in Punjab but there have been floods in Bihar also. Bihar is in floods. Not only Punjab, but all the States like Haryana, Kashmir, North Bihar, Assam, everywhere there have been flood. in Tripura also there are floods. The flood situation are floods. The flood situation should should be discussed in totality. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will you please sit down?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: The flood waters should be diverted to Cauveri then all the troubles can be solved ...(*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Punjab floods is a very tragic incident and I am sure the House will have several oppotunities to discuss it in view of its importance. Now let us proceed with the Question Hour...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: It is not a question of discussing Punjab... (Interruptions.)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 1.

*1. DR. NARREDDY THULOSI REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of recruiting agents who have been registered under the Emigration Act, 1983 and how many Indan workers have emgrated through these agents durng the last three years;

(b) what is the number of complaints receved from the workers durng 1992-93 and

(c) what redressal measures have been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINITER OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) to (c) A statemen is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The number of Recruiting Agent received from the workers during 1992 as on 31-3-93 was 1942. The numbe of Indian workers who were grante

clearances by offces of Protector of Emigrants for overseas employment during the last three years is as under:—

1991	—	1,95,898
1992	—	4,16,784
1993 (upto 31-5-93)	—	1-69,304

Eighty complaints were received from Indian workers during the year 1992-93.

The provisions of the Emigration Act, 1983 and the Rules framed thereunder are intended to safeguard the interests of workers seeking employment abroad. As and when complaints are received against registered Recuriting Agents, these are enquired into with the help of police and the concerned Indian Missions abroad depending upon the nature of complants. Offences under he Act have been made cognizable and fine and imprisonment have been prescribed as penalties. Necessary action is also taken by the Indian Missions abroad for redressal of the grievances of the Indian workers.

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Sir, labour force is one of the major resource in India. The Emigration Act, 1983 deals with the emigration of Indian workers overseas for employment on contractual basis and it also deals with the welfare and interest of the workers. But unfortunately, the Government of India is doing nothing in this regard. Either in getting overseas employment or for the welfare of the workers who are abroad, it is doing nothing. Sir, it is because of the skill, sincerity and the hard working nature of the Indian workers that the Indian workers get overseas employment and not because of the efforts of the Indian Government. But the Government of Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and some other countries put in a lot of effort to get overseas employment fod their woorkers. The Indian Government has not made any efforts in this regard. Not only this... *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will you please ask your question?

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: I am coming to it, Sir Not only this, some of the foreign employers in the Gulf countries, in some of the Gulf countries, employ Indian workers belonging to a particular religion only. It is happening. They are not employing workers belonging to other religions. This is also happening. Not only that, the recruiting agents are cheating the workers on a large scale. Workers sell their entire property and sometimes even the *Talis* of their wives and give huge amounts of money to the recruiting agents and they are finally cheated. My question is: What steps is the Government of India going to take to get averseas employment for Indian workers? What steps is Government of India is going to take to get overseas employment for the Indian workers belonging to all the religions? What stringent measures it going to take to curb and check the explovtation of Indian workers by the recruiting agents? These are my questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many are they? Second supplementary also you have finished.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, the number of workers going for employment overseas has been going up. Today, we have got more than I nullion Indians working oversets, particularly, in the Gulf countries. Sir, from the level of 1.63 lakhs in 1985, it went up to 4.17 lakhs in 1992-93. Therefore, there is a gradual increase and this increase was possible besause of liberalisation of the entire procedure. We intend to lineralise more. It is in the interests of the country that we are trying our best to promote overseas employment. As far as religion is concerned, there is no restriction for empolyment overseas on the ground of religion.

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: The Minister has not answered my question regarding the erploitation of workers by the recruiting agents.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You cannot ask six questions in one supplementary. So, if you want to ask that question as the second supplementary... *(Interruptions)*

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: But that is the main question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You cannot ask six or seven questions in one supplementary. They cannot be answered. Do you want to ask it as the second supplementary?

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDRD: My first supplementary was with regard to the exploitation of workers in India. My second supplementary is with regard to the exploitation of workers in foreign countries. Their problems are in the form of non-payment of wages, delayed payment of wages, changing the terms of agreement, premature termination of contract, unsatisfactory living and working conditions, so on and so forth. Sir, especially the maid-servants are facing a lot of problems. Most of the time they are being misused and blackmailed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not make statements. You please ask your know the rules of Question Hour.

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: I am taking only one or two minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please pose your question now.

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: So, the workers are being exploited in foreign countries.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, that is the question. You ask the Minister to answer that.

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Our Embassies are not taking any interest in this regard. Moreover, with regard to death compensation, our Government is taking a lot of time in sedning the proof certificates from India to the foreign countries. So, what steps is the Government going to take to protect the maid-servants working in the foreign countries? Has the Government got any proposal to ban the immigration of maid-servtnts? I would also like to know whether there is any proposal to open more branches of our Embassies in foreign countries There trust also be a time-limit for sending the proof certificates from India to the foreign countries in case of death of the workers.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: In his first supplementary, the hon. Member has accused the Government of not promoting employment overseas. In the second supplementary, he has asked as to whether I am going to ban sending people abroad. They are quite contradictory. Anyway, as far as complaints against the recruitjng agents are concerned, we do receive a number of complaints against the recruiting agents. The hon. Member is right in that. Whenever complaints come to the Government, we do enquire into them and necessary actions are taken. For example, in 1992-93, we suspended ten licences on account of complaints received from the workers. As far as maid-servants are concerned, I said that we have liberalised the procedure for getting the Immigration Clearance Certificate for many categories of employment. In fact, 17 categories of employment have been liberalised where we have said that immigration check is not required for them. But we have kept the immigration check for maid-servants simply because they need to be protected not only here but also in their places of work. Therefore, we do not, at the moment, propose to simplify the procedure relating to employment maid-scervants abroad.

SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government has received any complaints from the workers working abroad against their overseas employers regarding cheating, nonpayment of wages, change of jobs, nonpayment of compensation, etc. I would like to know what steps the Government

is taking to redress the grievances of those who complained against their overseas employers.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, I have stated in my main answer in para 2 that we have received complaints of the nature which the hon. Member has stated. In 1992, we had 80 such complaints and whenever complaints are received, our Embassies, our Consulates-General abroad look into those complaints. I am sorry I don't have the details of all the 80 complaints which I mentioned and of what type of action has been taken. I am trying to get the information from the Embassies and I will inform the hon. Member.

श्री इकबाल सिंह : मंत्री जी ने अभी यह बताया कि कोई ऐसी खास प्रोब्लम नहीं आ रही है। पंजाब में बहुत से केसेज ऐसे हैं जब फारेन जाने के लिए लोग एजेंट को बहुत पैसे देते हैं और ऐसा भी है कि बाहर उनको बहुत मुश्किल में भी आना पड़ता है। उनके लिए कोई अरेंजमेंण भी नहीं होता। इसके अतिरिक्त यह भी देखा जाता है कि पंजाब के किसान अपनी जमीन भी बेचकर अपने बच्चों को बाहर भेजते हैं। लेकिन जब वह बाहर से आते हैं तो उनके लिए इतनी मुश्किल होती है कि एक तो उनकी जमीन नहीं रहती और दूसरे, एजेंट उनके सारे पैसे ले जाते हैं और बाद में जो पुलिस की इंवोल्वमेंट होती है तो उससे केस और भी बिगड़ जाता है। तो क्या मंत्री जी ने ऐसा सेल बनाया है ताकि उसकी पूरी की पूरी इंक्वायरी हो जिससे पंजाब में कोई ऐसी डिफिकल्टी न हो खासकार के पंजाब में जो दोआबा एरिया है जिसमें जालंधर, होशियारपुर और कपूरथला आते हैं, इन जगहों के लोग बहुत बाहर जाते हैं। इसकी भी इंक्वायरी की जाए।

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, I did not state that there were no complaints. In fact, I admitted that there were a number of complaints. In 1992-93 itself, we had as many as 80 complaints and whenever complaints come to us, we do attend to them. The Protector-General of Immigrants set apart one hour each on two days in a week for people who want to come to him and lodge their complaints. That process is also there. It is not necessary that the people who have some complaints have to send it by post which can get delayed. They can appear in person of a designated date and time provided to them and those who are not able to come, can send their compaints in writing and we do look into them.

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: Mr. Chairman, I would like to know from the Minister whether the redressal and monitoring machinery for implementation of the said Act has been provided on a regional basis or only at the Ministry of Labour.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Well, as of now, it is only at the Ministry level in Shram Shakti Bhavan. It is a good thing to provide facilities at the regional level. I accept the recommendation of the hon. Member.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, the Minister has already answered the question in regard to complaints against recruiting agents. As the Minister knows full-well, in addition to the licensed recruiting agents, we have also a number of unlicensed, irregular recruiting agents. I am not interested in the processing of complaints but I would like to know the result because these complaints have been lodged against them for a number of years. I would like to know how many prosecutions have been launched and how many have been convicted during the last ten years.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, there are complaints that the licensed recruiting agents are having sub-agents who are not authorised. Sub-agents, in any case, cannot send people through the normal through the normay procedure. But the licensed agents keep their sub-agents in different parts. We do not recognise them because when the people are sent, they are sent through the prin-

cipal agent who is a licence holders. But there are complaints of thot nature. I am sorry, I do not have the figures for the last ten years. I will collect them and pass them on to the honourable Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. J. S. Raju.

SHRI J. SRAJU: Sir, because of the Hawala agents, workers are cheated and the Government is losing foreign exchange also. So, is there any proposal with the Government under consideration to deal with the foreign governments to send some part of the wages of the workers directly to their nominees in India?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, I could not reolly follow his question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Raju, can you kindly repeat your question?

SHRI J. S. RAJU: Yes, Sir. Because of the hawala agents, the workers are cheated and the Government is losing foreign exchange also. So, I would like to know whether there is any proprosal with the Government under consideration to deal with the foreign Governments to send some part of the wages of the workers directly to their7 nominess in India.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, we do have bilateral agreements entered into India with the State of Qatar and the State of Jordan and we are trying to enter into bilateral agreements with more countries because that may be a much better way of operating the manpower export to various countries. Now, as far as the question of foreign exchange is concerned, foreign exchange does come into this country. In fact, I was trying to know today what the extent of foreign exchange is which is coming in from these workers. But, unfortunately, the Reserve Bank of India does not keep accounts of those who are remitting below ten thousand rupees and most of our workers are remitting below ten thousands rupees and they put it in an account called the "Invisible Account". I do not have the exact figures with me now. But the figure for 1989-90 relating to this Invisible Account is Rs. 10,484 crores and I am sure that during the last two or three years, especially after the announcement of the New Economic Policy, the foreign exchange earnings must be higher than that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Question No. 2.

सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के संबंध में नीति

2. श्री राम जेठमलानी :
श्री सुरेश पचौरी

क्या नागरिक आपूर्ति, उपभोक्ता मामले और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि वर्तमान सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली में व्यापक सुधार हेतु सुझाव देने के लिए सरकार द्वारा एक पैनल का संगठन किया गया है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या इस पैनल ने सरकार को अपना प्रतिवेदन दे दिया है;

(ग) यदि हां, तो प्रतिवेदन का ब्यौरा क्या है ;

(घ) सरकार द्वारा इस प्रतिवेदन के आधार पर क्या कार्य योजना बनाई गई है ; और

(ङ) यदि नहीं, तो इसमें विलम्ब के क्या कारण हैं ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) A Committee has been constituted to make recommendations fir a National Policy on PDS, which would focus on the need to allocate larger and more meaningful quantities to the needy and deserving sections of society.

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*सभा में यह प्रश्न श्री राम जेठमलानी द्वारा पूछा गया ।